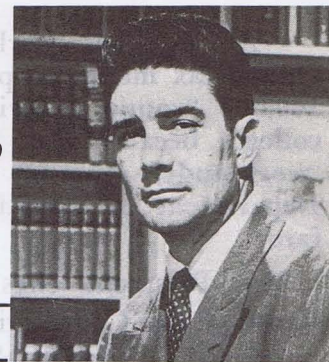


# THE *Dan Smoot Report*

Vol. 10, No. 13 (Broadcast 449) March 30, 1964 Dallas, Texas



DAN SMOOT

## JOHNSON'S WAR ON POVERTY

On March 16, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson submitted to Congress his special Message on Poverty, urging enactment of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 to make "national war on poverty," to achieve "total victory" over poverty, to "conquer poverty." The Act would include:

- Creation of a new Office of Economic Opportunity to be headed by R. Sargent Shriver, Jr.<sup>(1)</sup> The President had created the new agency, and appointed Mr. Shriver, more than a month before his formal message asking congressional "authorization."<sup>(2)</sup>

- Preparation of long-range plans at a local level, "calling upon all resources available to the community — federal and state, local and private, human and material." The plans would be submitted to the Office of Economic Opportunity for approval.<sup>(1)</sup>

- A volunteer force of thousands of trained and skilled persons to make "war against poverty."<sup>(1)</sup>

- Federal loans and guarantees to businesses "who will employ the unemployed."<sup>(1)</sup>

- Programs of retraining for "unemployed fathers and mothers" to "help them support their families in dignity while preparing themselves for new work."<sup>(1)</sup>

- Federal expenditures "to purchase needed land, organize cooperatives, and create new and adequate family farms," to "help those whose life on the land has been a struggle without hope."<sup>(1)</sup>

- Creation (through two-year enlistments, comparable to military inductions) of a "job corps" of 100,000 young men "whose background, health, and education make them least fit for useful work." The "job corpsmen" will be housed at approximately 100 camps (abandoned military posts, or new sites purchased by the federal government), under the general supervision of the Office of Economic Opportunity, though there are indications that military personnel will direct training in at least some of these "educational institutions."<sup>(1)</sup>

- A "national work-training program" for 200,000 boys and girls (ages 16 to 21). The program will be "developed" by state and local governments and by "non-profit agencies," but will be operated by the U.S. Department of Labor.<sup>(1)</sup>

THE DAN SMOOT REPORT, a magazine published every week by The Dan Smoot Report, Inc., mailing address P. O. Box 9538, Lakewood Station, Dallas, Texas 75214; Telephone TAYlor 1-2303 (office address 6441 Gaston Avenue). Subscription rates: \$10.00 a year, \$6.00 for 6 months, \$18.00 for two years. For first class mail \$12.50 a year; by airmail (including APO and FPO) \$14.50 a year. Reprints of specific issues: 1 copy for 25¢; 6 for \$1.00; 50 for \$5.50; 100 for \$10.00 — each price for bulk mailing to one person. Add 2% sales tax on all orders originating in Texas for Texas delivery.

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— A “national work-study” program, using federal tax money to provide part-time jobs for 140,000 “young Americans who do not go to college, because they cannot afford it.” This “work-study” program will be operated by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.<sup>(1)</sup>

The President cites the “general welfare” clause of the Constitution as authority for these programs — though there is no clause in the Constitution which grants the federal government general powers to do whatever the President and Congress deem good for the welfare of the people.<sup>(3)</sup>

The Constitution is a binding contract of government, limiting the federal government to the exercise of powers specifically granted. There is no constitutional grant of power for any of the programs outlined in the President’s “Poverty Message.” Hence, all of it is unconstitutional.

Though reminiscent of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s CCC and WPA camps of the 1930’s, the Johnson “youth program” is more closely related to the Party Youth Movements of communist countries, and to the quasi-military programs by which nazis controlled and indoctrinated young people in pre-war Germany.

Far-reaching as it is, the program outlined in the President’s Poverty Message hardly gives an inkling of the administration’s total plan for what the President calls his “war on poverty.” The plan actually includes every aspect of Johnson’s domestic program — including federal aid to education, farm subsidies, subsidies to business, urban renewal, medical care through social security, enactment of new child-labor laws, of federal minimum-wage legislation, a mass-transit program of granting federal tax money to states and cities for the purchase and socialization of private transit systems, federal firearms control laws, federal juvenile delinquency legislation — and even the pending Civil Rights Act of 1964<sup>(1)</sup> (HR 7152, already passed by the House; now pending in the Senate).

Most federal money for education goes to state and local governments for the building of expensive facilities (many of which have little to

do with basic education and do not ease the financial burden of parents trying to educate their children); to colleges and universities which have multi-million dollar endowments; and to scholarships for students who could get through college on their own or with private help — as bright, energetic youngsters from poor families have always managed to do in the United States.

The Billie Sol Estes case, and numerous others not so sensational, suggest that most federal farm subsidy money eventually goes to promoters, big farming syndicates, and owners of vast acreages. The federal farm programs, far from helping small farmers, have contributed heavily to eliminating self-sufficient, family-owned farms.

Relatively little of the tax money, which the federal government dispenses as subsidies to business, goes to struggling individuals trying to capture the dream of an independent business. Most of it goes to big corporations (like airlines) or to businessmen who avoid risking their own capital, while financing their ventures with tax money (or with government-guaranteed loans).

It is notorious that federal urban renewal funds generally benefit real estate developers and contractors who have funds necessary to take advantage of such government-made opportunities. In essence, the urban renewal program enables private individuals with influence and money to acquire property of other individuals for erection of “projects” and “developments,” conceived by government planners, which dispossess thousands of poor and modest-income individuals from their homes and private businesses.

Ten bills introduced in the Senate during 1963 deal with migrant farm workers. President Johnson includes these in his over-all “war on poverty” plan.<sup>(1)</sup> The bills (six of which have already been passed by the Senate) would provide federal tax money to finance day-care centers for children of migrant farm workers; give federal aid to states for educating such children; provide sanitation facilities and housing for workers and their families. Three of the pending migrant-farm-worker bills are especially interesting in connection with the “war on poverty.”<sup>(4)</sup>



One (S 523) is a child-labor law, limiting employment of children on farms.<sup>(4)</sup> Some of the finest people who ever lived in America spent a great deal of their childhood working on farms. No training or education program ever devised by experts is comparable (in developing youngsters into thrifty, sturdy, energetic, self-reliant adults) to the discipline of labor on a farm. Senate bill 523 (already passed by the Senate) would prohibit many teenagers from working voluntarily, as free individuals for private farm employers.<sup>(4)</sup> They would, thus, be made available for enlistment in the "work camps" financed by taxes and controlled by Washington bureaucrats.

S 528 (still in Senate committee) would establish minimum wages for farm workers.<sup>(4)</sup> Such a law would eliminate thousands of farm jobs. Men, women, and teenagers (many of them now proud and self-supporting in the kind of work and life which they prefer) would be out of work and on relief, or on the federal dole in "work camps." The minimum-wage level set by federal laws is generally prescribed by union officials and by politicians seeking "union support," who know nothing about the economic problems of running a farm or other business. Farmers could not pay the wages dictated by federal minimum wage laws. They would be forced to abandon their farms, or to restrict operations to what they could perform themselves.

In addition to S 528, proposing minimum wage laws for agricultural workers, the Johnson administration is supporting (as a part of the "war on poverty")<sup>(1)</sup> a general extension of the federal minimum wage law to cover employees not already included — such as laborers in hotels, restaurants, laundries, and dry cleaning establishments.<sup>(4)</sup> Every time the federal minimum wage law is extended, it forces many small businesses out of existence and puts thousands of unskilled workers out of jobs.

S 529 (pending in Senate Committee) would authorize collective bargaining for farm workers.<sup>(4)</sup> When union leaders acquire government-supported control of farm labor, farming as a free, private enterprise will be destroyed — and must

eventually be replaced by the collective farms of communism. Union officials, promoting their own economic or political aims, can call an industrial strike, without destroying (though grievously harming) the industrial establishments involved. When they strike a farmer, whose crops are in the field and must be harvested immediately, they ruin him.

President Kennedy proposed a "mass-transit" program; and many bills have been introduced in Congress to implement the proposal, though none has been passed. The principal bill is the Mass Transit Act (S 6), passed by the Senate on April 4, 1963, still pending in the House.<sup>(4)</sup> President Johnson supports this Mass Transit Act as a part of his war on poverty.<sup>(1)</sup> United States Senator Frank J. Lausche (Democrat, Ohio) calls the proposal a "vote-buying device" which would cost taxpayers billions of dollars. The Act would provide federal tax money for states and cities to buy out private transit systems.<sup>(5)</sup> It is a bold step toward nationalizing (which means communizing) the transportation industry in the United States. How could the Mass Transit Act possibly help make war on poverty, or, in any way, benefit the millions of Americans who, the President alleges, are now living in poverty?

## Rationale of The Poverty Program

How would the pending Civil Rights bill contribute to the war on poverty? The President's Poverty Message — and his other statements on the subject — present only trite generalities. The President has not tried to explain why every domestic program proposed or supported by his administration can be called an "anti-poverty" measure. He has not even defined *poverty*. The nearest thing to a rationale for the poverty program can be found in a report by the President's Council of Economic Advisers (Walter W. Heller, Chairman). The President attached this report to, and made it a part of, his Economic Message to Congress (January 20, 1964).<sup>(6)</sup>



The Heller report is a remarkable document. It dealt with poverty in the United States, alleging that 35 million, 100 thousand Americans are in poverty; and it provided a criterion for defining *poverty*. According to the Heller report, a person is in poverty if he lives alone on an income of \$1500.00 a year or less, or if he lives in a family group whose income is \$3000.00 a year or less.<sup>(6)</sup>

The Heller report disclosed: (1) that inadequate income is the reason for poverty; (2) that low earning is the reason for inadequate income; and (3) that low earning results either because a person does not receive much pay for his work, or does not work very much!<sup>(6)</sup>

With equal lucidity, the Heller report revealed why the "impoverished" receive low pay, or no pay: (1) they do not have jobs, for a variety of reasons, among them being that they lack ability, lack education, lack training, lack opportunity, or lack desire — "motivation and incentive" — to get a job; (2) they receive low wages when they work, because the kind of work they do does not pay well, or because their productivity is low, or because they lack ability, education, or desire — "motivation and incentive" — to make more money.<sup>(6)</sup>

The learned economists on the President's Council of Economic Advisers discovered that some people are poor because they have little savings or property. Others are impoverished because they receive paltry benefits from social security and public assistance programs. The Council asserted that a major reason for poverty in the United States is racial discrimination against non-whites — saying that "the incidence of poverty among non-whites is almost invariably higher than among whites, regardless of age, family type, or level of educational attainment"; alleging that 44% of all non-whites in the United States are in poverty.<sup>(6)</sup>

If the 44% figure is correct, it means that there are 9 million, 531 thousand impoverished non-whites in the United States; 25 million, 569 thousand impoverished whites. If all alleged racial discrimination were eliminated, how many

non-whites would thus be lifted from poverty? The Council of Economic Advisers does not say. Nor does it mention that the most crushing poverty among colored people (indeed, the worst poverty on earth) is in such all-colored nations as Haiti and the emerging nations of Africa, where there are few, if any, whites — where there is positively no racial discrimination against non-whites. How would elimination of alleged discrimination lift *any* American non-whites from poverty? Presumably, non-whites (now impoverished because they are unemployed) would get jobs; and employed non-whites (impoverished because of low salaries) would get better-paying jobs. Where would they get these new or better jobs? They would have to take the jobs away from whites. There is no promise in the Heller report that elimination of discrimination would create *new* jobs; it would merely make available to non-whites, jobs that whites now have.

In the United States, government (through "fair employment" laws or rules) often forces an employer to favor one job applicant over another; and so do monopolistic unions and other pressure groups. Personal relationships sometimes enable one person to get a job which another could handle better; but, for the most part, when left free to hire whom he pleases, every American employer tries to get the person best suited for the job available, regardless of race or creed. Whites *do* hold jobs that non-whites would take for less money; and non-whites have jobs that whites would like to have. In practically every case, this condition exists not because of the employer's racial prejudice, but because he judges that the person on the job is best suited for it.

While asserting that racial discrimination causes poverty among non-whites, the President's Council gave no facts — probably because no such facts exist. Yet, on the mere unsupported assertion, they claimed that enactment of the pending Civil Rights bill is an essential part of the "war on poverty."<sup>(6)</sup>

The Civil Rights bill is the Johnson administration's way of using the power of government to help non-whites; and to prevent private persons



from "discriminating" against them. Yet, some administration spokesmen imply that government itself has "discriminated" against non-whites, by giving them too much help!

On February 24, 1964, Assistant Secretary of Labor Patrick D. Moynihan spoke to interns in a race-relations project of the Eleanor Roosevelt Memorial Foundation. He said, "The most important fact of poverty in America is, without question, Negro poverty," adding that some negroes "have been on welfare for three or four generations." He said that "the Negro community is on the verge of being rotted" in the United States, *because welfare corrupts people.*<sup>(7)</sup>

There is profound truth in that statement, and also in Mr. Moynihan's statement that "the only way out of poverty for a man is employment."<sup>(7)</sup> For years, conservatives have been saying what Mr. Moynihan and other liberals are now saying about the harmful consequences of public welfare. Yet the liberals, while admitting the harm their programs have done, want to enlarge the programs and adopt others which would make matters worse. For example, liberals want medical care added to the compulsory social security system. Yet, the Heller report, which President Johnson submitted to Congress with his Economic Message in January, mentions social security as one of the causes of poverty. Apparently, the President's economic advisers did not realize what they were saying. They said that some people are in poverty because their social security benefits are inadequate — inadequate, because they are related to prior earnings. This seems to mean that, if a person's earnings are high during his working years, his social security benefits will be adequate. The benefits are inadequate for those who earned little. In other words, the social security system helps those who do not need help.

The massive spending programs recommended by the Johnson administration (such as urban renewal, farm and business subsidies, and others discussed briefly above, as well as others not mentioned) will put a great deal of money into the hands of people who do not need such help, but will do little, if anything, for the "impoverished." In fact, these federal spending programs will

probably cause *more* poverty. For its own grandiose projects (most of which do more harm than good) government confiscates, through taxation, the earnings and savings of productive people — thus making it impossible for the people to build more enterprises and create additional jobs by spending and investing their own money.

The various labor and wage control laws supported by the Johnson administration will hurt the very people whom the President proposes to help in his war on poverty.

Examine a case-history, typical of thousands. A teenage boy, or young man, drops out of school, not because of poverty (though his family may be poor), but because he has no yen for book-learning or cannot subject himself to the discipline of study. With no training or skills, he seeks employment. Countless business firms in every major city would give him a job if they could. They cannot, because *government* makes it impossible. If it were not for government, the young man could get a low-wage job as a common laborer in a printing firm, for example, where (if he is diligent, energetic, reliable, and moderately intelligent) he could eventually learn a good trade, or even progress to the point of self-employment in his own business. While growing and learning, he would be self-supporting. This was the old American way. How does government keep a young man from such a career? In some cases, "child-labor" laws prevent him from getting a job if he is under 18.<sup>(8)</sup> In some cases, unions (thanks to government's collective bargaining laws) have monopolistic control of labor in the plant where the young man would like to get a job. Union officials will not permit him to be hired on "apprentice" wages.

In many cases, the employer cannot hire the young man without paying him a minimum wage prescribed by federal or state law. The wage is much more than the unskilled beginner is worth; so, the employer cannot afford to hire him. Some business firms would like to give the young man a trial job, intending to keep him on if he learns and does well — let him go if he is unsatisfactory. Because of government's unemployment compensation programs, many employers dare not give



trial jobs to untrained, untested persons. Such people (if they have no ambition or character) can hang on to a job just long enough to "qualify" for unemployment compensation. The compensation which "government gives" does not come from government at all. It comes from a special tax, levied (in addition to other taxes) on the employer who tried to help the unemployed person in the first place. The amount of unemployment compensation tax which a business firm pays is determined by the number of successful claims filed against it by former employees.

Suppose the unskilled young man, who wants no more of school, seeks a job with a company not controlled by unions or minimum wage laws — a company run by a man willing to risk giving him a trial job. It often happens that the young man, discovering that he can get more money "from welfare" than from the job offered him, chooses welfare. For the rest of his life, he is on the dole, an unskilled person who cannot get a job.

## Proof of Failure

President Johnson himself (though recommending huge amounts of federal welfare of all conceivable kinds) decries welfare as a solution to the "poverty" problem. The President stresses "job-training" and "education" for the unemployed, instead of "handouts." Putting people on the government dole for "job-training" and "education" is giving them handouts. Moreover, bureaucrats in Washington, supervising "job corps" and "work-training" camps, cannot give young people the training they need to become productive employees for industry.

In short, our "poverty problem" (whatever its dimensions) cannot be solved or even mitigated until we abolish all unconstitutional government programs which plunder, harass, and control workers and businessmen, preventing our profit-motivated system of private capitalism from realizing the growth and expansion of which it is capable. Free enterprise, though it could never create heaven on earth, would produce a wide-

spread prosperity that even America is not accustomed to — if we would stop all illegal governmental intervention.

The record proves that the federal government cannot spend or manage this nation into prosperity. In a six-year period, 1933-1938, the Roosevelt administration spent 40 billion, 879 million, 76 thousand dollars.<sup>(9)</sup> Twenty-five percent of that was spent on military, international, and general operations of the federal government and for interest payments on the national debt. The remainder — 30 billion, 939 million, 76 thousand dollars — represented federal spending in Franklin D. Roosevelt's new deal "war on poverty."<sup>(9)</sup> In 1933, there were 12 million, 830 thousand unemployed persons in the United States. In 1938, there were 10 million, 390 thousand unemployed.<sup>(9)</sup> Almost 31 billion dollars of tax money spent in a period of 6 years — and the number of unemployed decreased by less than a million and a half! Imagine how many new jobs could have been created in those six years if individuals and private businesses had been permitted to spend 31 billion dollars which the federal government had confiscated from them!

*War on poverty* is obviously a political phrase, intended to stigmatize any opponent of any Johnson administration proposal as being in favor of poverty, or opposed to fighting poverty. Thus far, the tactic has worked well. On February 26, 1964, six Republicans<sup>(10)</sup> in Congress presented the Republican Poverty Program. It is nothing more than an endorsement of President Johnson's programs — with superficial admonitions about proper handling of the programs.<sup>(10)</sup> Of all prominent Republicans, only Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona has had the sense to say that we need to eliminate government meddling and permit free enterprise to fight poverty.<sup>(11)</sup>

The total Johnson program would almost completely socialize the economy of the United States. Even so, it is only a beginning. For a glimpse of what social planners really have in mind for the United States, the Congress and people should reflect on a 29-page memorandum submitted to



the White House on March 22, 1964 — by a group of influential people<sup>(12)</sup> calling themselves the "Ad Hoc Committee on the Triple Revolution." The Committee recommended that *the federal government pay all Americans an adequate income, whether they work or not.*<sup>(12)</sup>

**Job-holding as a mechanism for distributing goods and services is obsolete. Distribution should be divorced from job-holding. Government should provide every individual and every family with an adequate income, as a matter of right.**<sup>(12)</sup>

Putting the entire population on the federal dole (with an "adequate" income), relieving all of the necessity of work, would, the Ad Hoc Committee said, "release many persons to devote more time to creative activities."<sup>(12)</sup>

## The Real Poverty

**T**he appalling poverty in the United States is not poverty of money or of material goods. It is:

\*\*\*Poverty of intellect and character among politicians, editors, and others who seriously discuss President Johnson as a "conservative at heart," praising him for cutting expenses and reducing the budget. The estimated first-year cost of just that limited portion of the President's poverty program which is outlined in his March 16 Poverty Message is nearly 1 billion dollars with no estimate of future costs.<sup>(13)</sup> Other spending programs recommended by the President, but not included in his budget, would cost taxpayers literally hundreds of billions of dollars.

\*\*\*Poverty of patriotism among State Department officials who support a United Nations move to commit western nations to aid underdeveloped countries and to eliminate tariffs against products from these low-wage countries, even if such measures "appeared to be to the disadvantage of their own agricultural and industrial producers."<sup>(14)</sup> The aid and trade policies of the federal government have already destroyed some American industries, caused many to move overseas, and sorely hurt others, including the American cattle industry.

\*\*\*Poverty of decent concern for the fate of their own country, or even of their own children, among Americans so preoccupied with business and pleasure as usual that they re-elect "liberal" politicians to office year after year, never heeding the proof that these politicians support programs which are undermining the foundations of our free society.

\*\*\*Poverty of principle and understanding among union leaders who support programs to socialize the economy of the United States, knowing that when the process is complete the unions will be mere tools of the central government.

\*\*\*Poverty of sound judgment among American businessmen who use advertising budgets to support broadcasting programs and publications which brainwash the public of understanding and respect for the principles of liberty — but who are afraid to support programs which tell the freedom story.

\*\*\*Poverty of courage among parents who whine because "educationists" with government money are creating a government monopoly in the field of education and, in many places, corrupting their children's education — but who will do nothing, for fear of being criticized.

\*\*\*Poverty of spirit among church people who permit forces represented by the National Council of Churches to secularize their church institutions — whimpering that they know not what to do, while continuing to support with their money the forces they reprobate.

\*\*Poverty of moral fibre among businessmen who participate in government lending and subsidy programs, while complaining about the growth of big government.

\*\*\*Poverty of common sense on the part of everyone who does not realize that, if government *could* abolish all hardship and struggle for all people, it would destroy civilization. Hardship and struggle are essential ingredients of human life. Without them, few can develop strength and character — or find Faith in something more important than material goods.

## FOOTNOTES

- (1) Text of President Johnson's Message on Poverty, *The New York Times*, March 17, 1964, p. 22
- (2) "Johnson's Antipoverty Drive Stressed at Cabinet Sessions." by Robert E. Baskin, *The Dallas Morning News*, February 19, 1964, Section 1, p. 1
- (3) "There is no 'General Welfare Power' in the Constitution of the United States," by George W. Nilsson, *Journal of the American Bar Association*, January, 1961; *The Federalist Papers* numbers 41, 45
- (4) *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, January 3, 1964, pp. 6-17
- (5) *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, April 12, 1963, p. 558
- (6) *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, January 24, 1964, pp. 146, 162
- (7) *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, February 28, 1964, p. 143
- (8) *Child Labor Laws*, Department of Labor Bulletin 202, 1959
- (9) *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957*, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1960, pp. 719, 73
- (10) The six Republicans are Senators Jacob K. Javits (N.Y.), Len B. Jordan (Idaho), Jack Miller (Iowa); Representatives Thomas B. Curtis (Mo.), Clarence E. Kilburn (N.Y.), William B. Widnall (N.J.); *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, February 28, 1964, p. 413.
- (11) UPI dispatch from Nashua, New Hampshire, *The Dallas Morning News*, February 23, 1964, Section 1, p. 2
- (12) AP story from Washington, *The Dallas Times Herald*, March 23, 1964, p. 15A. Committee members include Gerald Piel, publisher of *Scientific American*; Michael Harrington, author; Linus Pauling, Nobel Prize winner; Ralph L. Helstein, President of the United Packinghouse, Food and Allied Workers; W. H. Ferry, vice president of the Fund for the Republic; Robert L. Heilbroner, economist and author; Gunnar Myrdal, Swedish socialist economist and author; Robert Theobald, economist and author.
- (13) *U. S. News & World Report*, March 30, 1964, pp. 33-4
- (14) AP story from Geneva, *The Dallas Morning News*, March 23, 1964, Section 2, p. 7

## WHO IS DAN SMOOT?

Born in Missouri, reared in Texas, Dan Smoot went to SMU in Dallas, getting BA and MA degrees in 1938 and 1940. In 1941, he joined the faculty at Harvard as a Teaching Fellow in English, doing graduate work for a doctorate in American Civilization.

In 1942, he left Harvard and joined the FBI. As an FBI Agent, he worked for three and a half years on communist investigations in the industrial Midwest; two years on FBI headquarters staff in Washington; and almost four years on general FBI cases in various parts of the nation.

In 1951, Smoot resigned from the FBI and helped start Facts Forum. On Facts Forum radio and television programs, Smoot spoke to a national audience, giving *both* sides of controversial issues.

In July, 1955, he resigned and started his present independent publishing and broadcasting business — a free-enterprise operation financed entirely by profits from sales: sales of *The Dan Smoot Report*, a weekly magazine; and sales of a weekly news-analysis broadcast, to business firms, for use on radio and television as an advertising vehicle. The *Report* and the broadcast give only *one* side in presenting documented truth about important issues — the side that uses the American Constitution as a yardstick. The *Report* is available by subscription; and the broadcasts are available for commercial sponsorship, anywhere in the United States.

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